

“Ready, Set, Go”
Acts 2:1-21
June 8, 2014
Salem United Methodist Church
Rev. Sue Shorb-Sterling

Last Sunday Debbie Ambrose, our Church Council Chair, told us how our church leaders met for several months to redefine our mission and create a new vision. These are printed in our bulletins. Would you read them with me? Hold those in your mind as I speak about mission and vision from a biblical perspective.

God is a God of visions from the vision of creation to the vision of reconciling humanity to God through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God visions, creates a mission, finds people to fulfill this mission so that the vision becomes a reality. And this is exactly what happened on that day of the Harvest Festival, Pentecost. The Harvest Festival was one of the major holidays in which Jews from different countries would make a pilgrimage to the Temple with the harvest thank offerings. These pilgrims spoke many different languages. God’s vision was for the message of the Son, Jesus, to be sent out to all these countries. So the disciples did what Jesus told them to do. They got “ready.” They waited, but I don’t think any of them could have envisioned what the “set” part of this endeavor would be like. Neither could they have imagined how they would “go.” With the Holy Spirit to empower them, they were people on a mission, fulfilling God’s vision.

So why are mission and vision important? Joel Barker, author of *Power of Vision*, states, “Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world.”

Jesus spent three years getting the disciples ready, getting them set to see the vision, and then sent them to “Go... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28: 18-20). These verses are called the Great Commission. The United Methodist Church has adapted Christ’s mission to, “The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

This past week we remembered the results of the vision and mission of D-Day. Hitler had a vision to rule all of Europe. His mission was to not be stopped. The Allies had a vision, too. General Eisenhower’s stated the vision. To take “*land amphibious and airborne forces on the Normandy coast... destroying the German strength and freeing France.*” It took two years to get the mission ready. Then they set, waiting for the go. The vision with the mission completed successfully became a reality. Not only was the course of the war changed, but the history of the world.

I am excited about our vision of being a signpost of God’s grace to the world. In many ways we have been embodying this vision for 181 years as we have been an integral part of the Brookeville community. And we have a wonderful opportunity to be that grace when our town celebrates the 200th anniversary when the Quaker citizens of Brookeville offered their grace with hospitality to strangers- the refugees who fled the British burning of Washington. The most famous refugee was President James Madison. During his one night retreat here Madison had time to rest, think, and be refortified so he lead our fledgling nation forward even with the

capital city was lying in ashes. One woman has a vision to recreate the events as a living history event in Brookeville on August 30 and 31. Salem will be in the center of the activity, offering grace and hospitality. Our parking lot and our Community Hall will be a staging area for those who will be creating a Living History exhibits in town. On Sunday morning we will be having one worship service at 9:15 on the front lawn as we give thanks for this town who offered this generous hospitality to. In addition to all of this, we have been invited to be one of the major food vendors. We will be selling food all day for two days. Pray for good weather, many hands (every available person; invite friends, family to help), and that Salem will be a witness of God's grace to the expected thousands.

This brings us back to our vision and mission. Now that we have our vision and mission statements, you may be asking, "So what now?" The Spirit is always with us, individually and as a church. The Spirit has been among us as leaders discerned our mission and vision. But there is more Spirit work to be done. How do we live out these out? That depends on the Holy Spirit and us. So that we can be open to the Holy Spirit, pray this.

Creating and Loving God, Ruler of Heaven and earth, we seek your voice, your heart, your mind, your Spirit. You know the plans you have for us as we strive to grow in our faith and reach others with your love. Take away any negativity, cynicism, or unconstructive thoughts. And pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on this entire congregation. Give us your wisdom and the courage that we need to build something bigger than ourselves, your Kingdom on earth. We pray this in name of Jesus the Christ, Amen.

Then consider Salem's vision and mission along with these questions.

The Vision of Salem United Methodist Church is to be a signpost of God's grace to the world.

How can we be a signpost of God's grace in Brookeville, in your neighborhood, in Olney, in Montgomery County?

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***The Mission of the People of Salem United Methodist Church  
is to grow in Christian faith and express God's love through serving others.***

**How can or does the church help you grow in your Christian faith?**

**How can or does the church express God's love through serving others?**

Whatever the Spirit lays on your heart feel free to send them to:

[pastor@salemunitedmethodist.org](mailto:pastor@salemunitedmethodist.org).

**Resources:** <http://www.aero-web.org/history/wwii/d-day/1.htm>